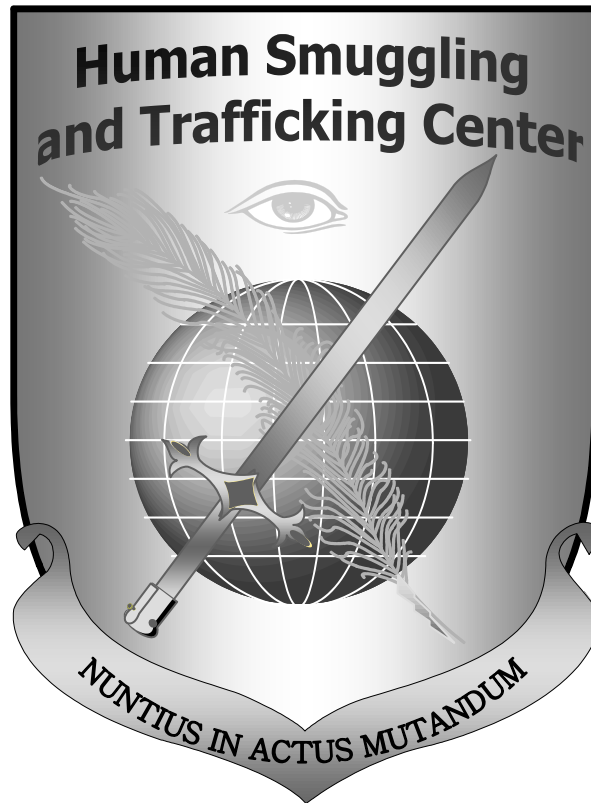


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Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center



HSTC Intelligence Note

**Tenancingo Bulletin #10:
Traffickers Use Old Tricks
to Control Victims**

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(CONTEXT STATEMENT: The information in this report was provided by the Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center (HSTC) in collaboration with the participating agencies of the HSTC. The HSTC is an interagency fusion center and information clearinghouse, composed of representatives from various governmental agencies, and focused on matters of human smuggling, human trafficking, and the facilitation of terrorist travel. The HSTC provides the U.S. Government with a mechanism to achieve greater integration and overall effectiveness in its efforts to eliminate these activities. The HSTC is unique among U.S. organizations and centers in that it concentrates on illicit worldwide travel and provides guidance to U.S. Government policymakers.)

Scope Note: *This is the tenth in a series of bulletins at the unclassified level based solely on open source reporting intended to inform federal, state, and local law enforcement about the Tlaxcala, Mexico-based sex trafficking network with ties to the U.S.*

(U) Traffickers Use Old Tricks to Control Victims

(U) Customs indigenous to peoples of Tlaxcala, Mexico and other central and southern rural Mexican states known collectively as “The South” help to explain Tlaxcala-based sex traffickers’ methods of control and their sustained effectiveness. Traffickers’ successful adaptation of local customs is just one factor that has allowed the sex trafficking industry to thrive in this region. We will continue to explore aspects of the development of this culture in successive Intelligence Notes.

(U) Mexican sociologists and anthropologists have identified several spheres of control by Tlaxcala-based traffickers over their victims – during recruitment, initiation into prostitution, and in their places of residence and sexual transactions over the long-term.

(U) Recruitment

(U) At the recruitment phase, traffickers have adapted traditional cultural dominance over women in the process of marriage with two methods that gain and retain control over trafficking victims, according to social scientist who have published extensively on the trafficking culture in this region of Mexico. To maintain separation from their community and family roles, Tlaxcala-based traffickers aim to recruit and prostitute women in states other than Tlaxcala. In societies based on community and family ties, a victim has less recourse when separated from her social network.¹

(U) Initiation into Prostitution

(U) Whether a victim is recruited via seduction by “a good talker” or forcibly through seduction under false pretenses, theft, or kidnapping, a trafficker’s successful initiation of a victim into prostitution hinges on her seeing her body as merchandise. As one victim testified in a U.S. trial, “he lied to me... and every time I told him that I didn’t want to do the work that he had put me in that position to do, he said that’s what I was born to do.”²

(U) Places of Residence and Work

(U) Once a victim has been indoctrinated into a life of prostitution, a trafficker employs methods of control in her places of residence and sexual transactions to ensure that she won't easily depart.³ In Tlaxcala-originating trafficking cases prosecuted in the U.S., indebtedness, drugs, violence, rape, and emotional control, including threats involving family members hindered victims' escape and deterred their reports to authorities.^{4,5} One victim testified as to physical abuse: "Francisco would beat ... if she didn't do whatever he wanted her to do... He made blood come out of her nose ... and I heard that he would tell them that they would have to sleep with 30, 40, or 50 men and bring in a lot of money."

(U) Traffickers' threats about and separation of victims from their families also serve to control them: "We couldn't talk to anybody, not even my own mother. . . It was always lying to us . . . and if they would say anything to their families, that he would beat them" Traffickers separated families of victims to weaken and intimidate them: "Francisco separated me from my sister... I never knew how she was."⁶ Another victim testified threats of physical harm to her family, "He threatened me many times that if I did something or somebody else did something, he would order my family killed."

(U) Traffickers' methods of controlling their victims begin with underhanded seduction during their recruitment, continue through their initiation into forced prostitution, and culminate in full blown physical and emotional abuse. Programs to educate the women that fit Tlaxcala-based traffickers' poor, rural, and indigenous target profile could assist them to identify and thwart these trafficker victimization strategies before they fall victim.

¹(U) Inmujeres, "Trata de Personas: Padrotes, iniciacion, y modus operandi," July 2009, http://cedoc.inmujeres.gob.mx/documentos_download/101080.pdf, accessed 29 October 2010.

² (U) United States District Court, Northern District of Georgia, Atlanta Division, "USA V. Francisco Cortes-Meza, Defendant," Docket No. 1:08-CR-55-RWS-3, 1 April 2010.

³(U) Inmujeres, "Trata de Personas: Padrotes, iniciacion, y modus operandi," July 2009, http://cedoc.inmujeres.gob.mx/documentos_download/101080.pdf, accessed 29 October 2010.

⁴(U) CIMAC, "Estudio de Caso: La Familia Carreto: Trata de Mujeres Mexicanas en Mexico y en Queens, Nueva York," <http://www.cimacnoticias.com/especiales/trata/casostrata/casocarreto.htm>, accessed 9 November 2010.

⁵(U) *La Prensa*, "Hondureñas caen en redes que las venden por \$40," 13 April 2010, <http://www.laprensa.hn/Apertura/Ediciones/2010/04/14/Noticias/Hondurenas-caen-en-redes-que-las-venden-por-40>, accessed 1 November 2010.

⁶ (U) United States District Court, Northern District of Georgia, Atlanta Division, "USA V. Francisco Cortes-Meza, Defendant," Docket No. 1:08-CR-55-RWS-3, 1 April 2010.